

The Connecticut General Assembly

Senator Toni N. Harp – 10th District



- Good morning, Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban, Ranking Members, and all who serve on the Children's Committee. I'm Senator Toni Harp, I represent the state's 10th Senatorial District.
- I appear before you on behalf of Senate Bill 328 – Section one of this bill was introduced because I believe there is a link between video violence and aggressive behavior in children.
- This bill – should it become law – will prohibit the use of certain video games by minors
- With this legislation I aim to put the public's health, safety, and well-being ahead of a child's desire to aim a simulated gun at simulated people.
- To allow access to these lifelike simulators is to teach point-and-shoot proficiency and, with the shock and horror of recent, local events still fresh in our minds and the memory of Connecticut victims still held in our hearts, there's no doubt in my mind that these 'games' can put real people at risk again in the future.

- These games inadvertently teach young children that shooting people is easy, virtually harmless, and without serious consequence. These games separate and desensitize children to the trauma and life-altering, literally shattering reality of gun violence.
- There is hard evidence repeatedly connecting these games with tragic violence committed by children right here in Connecticut neighborhoods, and all across America. But if we can keep their fingers off these triggers, then perhaps we can keep some of those violent thoughts out of their heads.
- Twelve years ago, when the Connecticut General Assembly approved a bill very similar to this one, our Judiciary Committee heard testimony that the violent video technology used in these games is also used to train police and military personnel. The stated purpose of *those* training videos is to desensitize people to killing others with guns and to improve the efficiency with which people execute that killing.
- 12 years ago, I pointed out how the U.S. Surgeon General had determined a causal relationship between media violence and aggressive behavior very similar to the one between smoking and lung cancer. At that time I cited this

quote from a draft report from the Surgeon General's office, "From a public health perspective, today's (media) consumption patterns are far from optimal. And for many children they are clearly harmful."

- In addition to this impetus at the federal level, other initiatives at the state and local levels from coast to coast suggest a growing tide of dissatisfaction with children's access and exposure to the violence in these games.
- In the time since that bill was approved, only to be vetoed, literally gut-wrenching gun violence has rained down upon unsuspecting, innocent victims from coast to coast in our nation.
- It is time once again for my colleagues in the General Assembly to join me and help put Connecticut ahead of the pack in terms of restricting participation in these ill-advised forms of entertainment.

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